



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk 860-441-6640  
Town Manager  
860-441-6630

## Meeting Minutes

### Representative Town Meeting

**Moderator Syma Ebbin, Representatives Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Alicia T. Bauer, Portia Bordelon, Jordan Brayman, Clarence Casper, Kathy Chase, Bobbi Jo Cini, Mallory Doyle, Thomas Frickman, James Gustavson, Autumn Hanscom, Rosanne Kotowski, Brandon Marley, Douglas R. Marshall, Robert Martin, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Juan Melendez, Nancy Mello Miller, Roscoe Merritt, Doug Monaghan, Scott Newsome, Cutter Oliver, Richard Pasqualini, Sheila Perry, Shawn Powers, Carolann Quinn, Kate Richards, Reginald Stanford, Anni Rodgers, Judith Strobe, Irma Streeter, James Streeter, Latisha Thompson, Patricia Wagner, Beverly Washington, Gary Welles, Michael Whitehouse, and Michael Whitney**

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Wednesday, February 14, 2018

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

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#### REGULAR MEETING

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*Moderator Ebbin call the meeting to order at 7:31 pm.*

#### A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Chase, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Martin, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Richards, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Thompson, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles and Rep. Whitehouse  
Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Brayman, Rep. Casper, Rep. Cini, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marley, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Perry, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Rogers, Rep. Stanford, Rep. Strobe, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Whitney

*Town Clerk Betsy Moukwasher called the roll and announced that twenty-four members were present. A quorum was declared.*

*Also present were Town Manager John Burt, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Town Councilor Rachael Franco, Board of Education members Gretchen Newsome, Jay Weitlauf, and Lee White, Assistant Superintendent Susan Austin, Director of OPDS Jon Reiner, and Assistant Director of OPDS Deb Jones.*

#### B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The members observed a moment of silence and Rep. Melendez led the Salute to the Flag.*

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2018

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Monaghan, seconded by Rep. Powers. Rep. Richards and Moderator Ebbin identified a few typographical errors. The motion to approve the minutes carried unanimously.*

#### D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

*None.*

#### E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

*Moderator Ebbin reported that Reps. Bauer, Casper, Cini, Doyle, McDermott, Massett, Perry, Stanford, Strobe, and Wagner had informed the Town Clerk of their absences. Ms. Ebbin announced that the Mystic Irish 5K Road Race will be held on March 17th at 10:00 am. Ms. Ebbin read a letter that she received from Shelly Gardner regarding the Superintendent of Schools.*

#### F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

##### 1. Financial report

*Town Manager John Burt reported that the Fund Balance as of January 31, 2018 was approximately \$8.9 million, which is 7.44% of the FYE 2018 General Fund Adjusted Budget. He*

reported that the General Contingency account has a current balance of \$279,325. He reported that the Capital Reserve Fund balance is estimated at \$1.2 million. Mr. Burt stated that he had received the Grand List Report and that the Town Clerk will send that report to the RTM members.

## **2. Monthly briefing**

Town Manager John Burt reported that the 2018 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be July 18th at the Groton Transfer Station. He stated that Groton Human Services and TVCCA's Retired Senior Volunteer Program will offer monthly Veterans' Coffeehouses at the Human Services Building with the first Coffeehouse to be held on Friday, February 16th. He reported that the Groton Public Library will hold an open house for their Groton History Room on Wednesday, February 28th from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm. Mr. Burt introduced Police Chief LJ Fusaro.

Chief Fusaro gave a brief overview of the progress they have made with the purchase of the new radio, data collection, and storage systems. He announced that they are in the final phases of purchasing a new police dog and selecting a new handler for the dog. He announced that Community Policing will begin soon in Navy Housing, Downtown Mystic, and the Poquonnock Bridge neighborhood. Mr. Fusaro report that a member of the Police Department has been selected to participate in a special cyber training school in Alabama. In response to Rep. Frickman, Chief Fusaro stated that there is a full-time Police Officer at the High School and that there are patrols that regularly check-in at the elementary and middle schools. In response to Rep. Wells, Chief Fusaro stated that they are in communication with the Stonington Police Department regarding integrated radio systems. In response to Rep. Bailey, Chief Fusaro stated that the FAA dictates the location of our radio antennas. He stated that adding additional antenna locations would be expensive. In response to Rep. Washington, Chief Fusaro stated that he has discussed integrating the radio systems with City of Groton Police Chief Spellman and Groton Long Point Chief Nixon. He stated that this system will be available to them.

In response to Rep. Kotowski, Mr. Burt stated that the process for accepting the bids for the Mystic Oral School has not been fully laid out. He stated that nothing has changed with respect to Fitch Middle School, but that we are considering a permanent name for the building.

In response to Rep. Chase, Mr. Burt stated that he will send out answers to the question of street cleaning on Long Hill Road and snow plowing at the schools on days that there is no school.

## **G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Director of Planning and Development Jon Reiner gave a detailed presentation of the current marketing tools and projects associated with economic development in the Town of Groton. Mr. Reiner gave a detailed presentation on the propose Tax Increment Financing (TIF) policy that is under Town Council consideration. For the full presentation, please visit GMTV on the Town website.

In response to Rep. Powers, Mr. Reiner stated that the State has a program in place right now for green energy tax credits. He stated that the Town has not written this type of building into the code yet.

In response to Rep. Kotowski. Mr. Reiner stated that the Town is not going to bond for the Route 184 sewer line project. He stated that this project would utilize a credit enhancement agreement where a developer would build the sewer line to our standards. Through tax increment financing, we would be able to help a developer finance the cost.

In response to Rep. Newsome, Mr. Reiner stated that Great Blue conducted a phone survey to determine economic and quality of life preferences for the Town.

In response to Rep. Mello Miller, Mr. Reiner stated that the new Zoning Regulations do not propose massive sweeping changes. He stated that the most substantial rezoning will be in the

areas around Route 1. He stated that the changes planned are consistent with the Plan of Development.

Mr. Reiner stated that the Tax Increment Financing policy will set the framework for how the future tax increment financing districts will be set up. It will lay the groundwork for what we will and won't do and the types of funding mechanisms and the ratios of what we will be willing to give back to a developer. The next step would be to develop specific master plans in the town with defined boundaries.

In response to Rep. Whitehouse, Mr. Reiner stated that if we bond a project, we could be left responsible for the funds. He stated with a credit enhancement agreement, if the developer doesn't pay the taxes, we would not be legally required to pay it back.

In response to Rep. Kotowski, Mr. Reiner stated that if a developer lays a sewer line from the Marriott to Route 184, any residential connections would be paid by the resident.

In response to Rep. Monaghan, Mr. Reiner stated that some of the specific parameters limit participation. He stated that in TIF, you have to be doing at least \$1 million of improvement, not including the acquisition of the land.

In response to Rep. Chase, Mr. Reiner stated that any stipulations would be negotiated as part of the credit enhancement agreement.

Rep. Jim Streeter stated that this program seems similar to a five or ten year tax abatement. Mr. Reiner stated that if a developer builds a sewer line they are responsible to pay for it, not the Town. Mr. Reiner stated that this program is very different from a tax abatement program. He stated that tax abatement programs are short run and that the TIF program is designed to run up to thirty years. He stated that there could be escalators negotiated into the agreements to address property re-assessments.

In response to Rep. Bordelon, Mr. Reiner stated that the Town's larger Plan of Conservation and Development protects our natural habitat and resources. He stated that the areas where the TIF district are located are in areas that have been targeted for redevelopment. He stated that as these areas are redeveloped, we will get better environmental protection from the new infrastructure. He stated that he and his staff are environmentally educated and they are very concerned about protecting the environment and natural resources.

## **H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Dr. Graner reported that the School District launched the new Magnet Middle School Program and met with parents on February 13th, 2018. He reported that Cutler Middle School will be operating as an Arts and Humanities School and Westside Middle School will be operating as a Science and Technology/Engineering and Math (STEM) School next year. He stated that parents will have the opportunity to choose if they would like their children to stay in their neighborhood school or attend the other themed magnet school. He stated that in two years, the two middle schools will become the new consolidated middle school. He stated that the STEM and Arts & Humanities pathways will continue at the new consolidated middle school. He distributed information outlining the Alliance District draft application. He stated that the \$600,000 grant for the Alliance District will expire on June 30, 2018 and that there are no assurances of any funding going forward. Dr. Graner provided information regarding remedial intervention.

In response to Rep. Newsome, Dr. Graner stated that the High School offers an advanced course in Spanish for bi-lingual students. He stated that this is an advanced literature course.

In response to Rep. Bordelon, Dr. Graner stated that the literacy and math specialist for the two middle schools are now full-time. He explained how the support teachers are distributed

throughout the district. He explained that 504 is a program for students that cannot access their curriculums, such as a student with mobility issues may need an elevator. Rep. Bordelon clarified her question stating that a majority of the children at Fitch High School do not fall under an IEP so therefore they do not need much intervention. She stated that they are 504 because they might be identified as having ADD or ADHD and are in need of academic support. Dr. Graner stated that he will look into this issue.

In response to Rep. Whitehouse, Dr. Graner explained that Title One is part of the Federal Education Act and it includes schools that have a high percentage of children that qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. He stated that there is a remedial grant that is used for additional support.

Dr. Graner confirmed Rep. Kotowski statements that we received a \$4 million grant to establish the new magnet schools. She stated that this money is not counted in the budget. All expenses for the new magnet middle schools will be funded through this grant until the new consolidated middle school opens. She stated that by closing Pleasant Valley School we saved \$1.8 million. She asked if the RTM will be able to see where this money was saved. In response, Dr. Graner answered yes. He stated that the budget was cut last spring by \$2.8 million. He stated that the RTM returned \$1.5 million this past January. He stated that this action brought the budget back to zero. He stated that there was \$1.27 million saved by closing Pleasant Valley School. Rep. Kotowski questioned that if we got back to zero, does that mean we really just reduced the proposed increase and didn't save any money? He stated that the proposed increase was about \$1.3 million. By going back to zero we wiped out the proposed increase.

Rep. Newsome stated that the \$600,000 grant for the Alliance District is to fund some personnel, with no guarantees that this money will be re-funded the following years. He asked if we will be responsible to pay for the new personnel or lay them off. Dr. Graner stated that the personnel that are identified in the Alliance District have been put into next year's budget. He stated that they won't be laid off.

## **I. LIAISON REPORTS**

Town Council Liaison Rep. Kotowski read a report of the Town Council current actions. The report is on file.

## **J. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **1. FINANCE - Chairman Washington**

No meeting, no report.

### **2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES -Chairman Oliver**

No meeting, no report.

### **3. EDUCATION - Chairman Whitney**

No meeting, no report.

### **4. RECREATION - Chairman Mello Miller**

No meeting, no report.

### **5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman J. Streeter**

No meeting, no report.

### **6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Newsome**

No meeting, no report.

### **7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Richards**

No meeting, no report.

Rep. Kotowski requested that the meeting minutes of the January 10, 2018 Finance Committee be

*moved for adoption because they are different from the report given on the night of the meeting.*

*Moderator Ebbin stated that the minutes will be included for approval at the next meeting of the RTM.*

**K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS**

*Rep. Kotowski stated that there was some information presented in the January 10th minutes on page 12 that need clarification. She submitted documentation that supports the statement of the 8.7 % increase in taxes last year. She submitted a written explanation of why it doesn't do anyone any good if our home values go down.*

*Moderator Ebbin stated that we will make this information available.*

**L. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Rep. Kotowski submitted three referrals in writing. Moderator Ebbin referred these items to the Rules & Procedures Committee.*

*Rep. Washington raised a parliamentary question. Town Clerk Moukawsher stated that the Board of Education subcommittees are not like the RTM subcommittees. RTM committees do not meet regularly. In order to approve the committee minutes, the RTM committees would need to have a special meeting. The minutes of the committee belong to the RTM and the full RTM must approve them.*

*Rep. J. Streeter requested that the Town Clerk comment on the referral to consider excluding the option to move the question on a new item. Town Clerk Moukawsher stated that the RTM adopts its own rules and it does not have to abide by Robert's Rule of Order. Moderator Ebbin stated that the current rules allow for ten minutes of debate before a motion to Move the Question can be made.*

**M. ADJOURNMENT**

*Rep. Monaghan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Rep. Powers and so declared by Moderator Ebbin.*

*Attested:*

*Betsy Moukawsher  
Groton Town Clerk  
Clerk of the RTM*